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January, 1896.

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ONE DASH—HORSES.

BY STEPHEN CRANE.

Author of "The Black Riders," Etc., (Copyright, 1895.) SYNOPSIS.

Richardson and his Mexican servant Jose, arrive, an evening fall, at a Mexican hamlet, where they put up at a small inn. The saddles are brought in and both lie down to sleep. They are awakened by the music in an adjoining room of a dance, and Richardson hears two Mexicans quarreling as to his robbery and possibly murder. One of them, a fat round-faced fellow, enters the room with a torch, followed by several companions. Finding Richardson on the alert, revolver in hand, they beat his servant, hoping to provoke him to an attack. He remains calm. Just then the voices of the girls are heard calling the men to dance, and the Mexicans gradually withdraw.

PART II.

As grim white sheets, the black and silver of coffin, all the panoply of death affect us because of that which they hide, so this blanket, dangling before a hole in an adobe wall, was to Richardson a horrible emblem, and a horrible thing in itself. In his present mood, Richardson could not have been brought to touch it with his finger.

The celebrating Mexicans, occasionally howled in song. The guitarist played with speed and enthusiasm.

Richardson longed to run. But in this mystic and threatening gloom, his terror convinced him that a move on his part would be a signal for the pounce of death. Jose, crouching absently, occasionally mumbled. Slowly and ponderously as stars the minutes went.

Suddenly Richardson thrilled and started. His breath, for a moment, left him. In sleep his nerveless fingers had allowed his revolver to fall and clang upon the hard floor. He grasped it up hastily, and his glance swept apprehensively over the room.

A chill blue light of dawn was in the place. Every outline was a slowly growing detail was following detail. The dread blanket did not move. The riotous company had gone or become silent.

Richardson felt in his blood the effect of this cold dawn. The candor of breaking day brought his nerve. He touched Jose. "Come," he said. His servant lifted his lined face, and, comprehending, Richardson buckled on his spurs and strode up; Jose obediently lifted the two great saddles. Richardson held two bridles and a blanket on his left arm. In his right hand he held his revolver. They sneaked toward the door.

The man who said that spurs jingled was insane. Spurs have a mellow clash—clash—clash. Walking in spurs—noticeably Mexican spurs—you remind yourself vaguely of a telegraph line.

Richardson was inexpressibly shocked when he came to walk. He sounded to himself like a pair of cymbals. He could have known of this if he had reflected, but then he was escaping, not reflecting. He made a gesture of despair, and from under the two saddles Jose tried to make one of hopeless horror. Richardson stooped, and with shaking fingers unfastened the spurs. Taking them in his left hand, he picked up his revolver and they slunk towards the door.

On the threshold, Richardson looked back. In the corner, he saw, watching him with large eyes, the Indian man and woman who had been his hosts. Throughout the night they had made no sign, and now they neither spoke nor moved. Yet Richardson thought he detected meek satisfaction at his departure.

The street was still and deserted. In the eastern sky there was a lemon-colored patch.

Jose had picked the horses at the side of the house. As the two men came around the corner Richardson's animal set up a whinny of welcome. The little horse had evidently heard them coming. He stood facing them, his ears cocked forward, his eyes bright with welcome.

Richardson made a frantic gesture, but the horse in his happiness at the appearance of his friends whinnied with enthusiasm.

The American felt at the time that he could have strangled his well-beloved steed. Upon the threshold of safety, he was being betrayed by his horse, his friend. He felt the same hate for the horse that he would have felt for a dragon. And yet, as he



JOSE'S MOANS AND CRIES AMOUNTED TO A

UNIVERSITY COURSE IN THEOLOGY.

glanced wildly about him, he could see nothing stirring in the street, nor at the doors of the tomb-like houses.

Jose had his own saddle girth and both bridles buckled in a moment. He curled the picket ropes with a few sweeps of his arm. The fingers of Richardson, however, were shaking so that he could hardly buckle the girth. His hands were in invisible mittens. He was wondering, calculating, hoping about his horse. He knew the little animal's willingness and courage under all circumstances up to this time, but then here it was different. Who could tell if some wretched instance of equine perversity was not about to develop. Maybe the little fellow would not feel like smoking over the plain at express speed this morning, and so he would rebel and kick and be wicked. Maybe he would be without feeling of interest, and run listlessly. All men who have had to hurry in the saddle know what it is to be on a horse who does not understand the dramatic situation. Riding a lame sheep is bliss to it. Richardson, fumbling furiously at the girth, thought of these things.

Presently he had fastened. He swung into the saddle, and as he did so his horse made a mad jump forward. The spurs of Jose scratched the flanks of his great black animal, and side by side the two horses raced down the village street. The American heard his horse breathe a quivering sigh of excitement.

Those four feet skinned. They were as light as fairy puff balls. The houses of the village glided past in a moment, and the great, clear silent plain appeared like a pale blue sea of mist and wet bushes. Above the mountains the colors of the sunlight were like the first tones, the opening chords of the mighty hymn of the morning.

The American looked down at his horse. He felt in his heart the first thrill of confidence. The little animal, unurged and quite tranquil, moving his air of interest in the scenery, was nevertheless bounding into the eye of the breaking day with the speed of a frightened antelope. Richardson, looking down, saw the long, fine reach of forelimb as steady as steel machinery. As the ground receded past, the long, dried grasses, hines, and cactus plants were dull blue. A wind whirled the horse's mane over his rider's bridle hand.

Jose's profile was lined against the pale sky. It was as that of a man who swims alone in the ocean. His eyes glinted like metal fastened on some unknown point ahead of him, some mystic place of safety. Occasionally his mouth puckered in a little unheeded cry, and his legs, banded back, worked spasmodically as his spurred heels sliced the flanks of his charger.

Richardson consulted the gloom in

the went for signs of a hard-riding yelling cavalcade. He knew that whereas his friends the enemy had not attacked him when he had sat still and with apparent calmness confronted them, they would certainly take furiously after him now that he had run from them—now that he had confessed to them that he was the weaker. Their valor would grow like weeds in the spring, and upon discovering his escape they would ride forth dauntless warriors.

Sometimes he was sure he saw them. Sometimes he was sure he heard them. Continually looking backward over his shoulder, he studied the purple expanses where the night was marching away. Jose rolled and shuddered in his saddle, persistently disturbing the stride of the black horse, fretting and worrying him until the white foam flew, and the great shoulders shone like satin from the sweat.

Jose, however, drew his horse carefully down to a walk. Jose wished to rush insanely on, but the American spoke to him sternly. As the two paced forward side by side, Richardson's little horse thrust over his soft nose and inquired into the black's condition.

Riding with Jose was like riding with a corpse. His face resembled a cast in lead. Sometimes he swung forward and almost pitched from his seat. Richardson was so frightened himself to do anything but hate this man for his



THE FAT MEXICAN FAIRLY GROVELED ON HIS

HORSE'S NECK.

fear. Finally, he issued a mandate which nearly caused Jose's eyes to slide out of his head and fall to the ground like two silver coins.

"Ride behind me—about fifty paces."

"Rider!" stuttered the servant.

"Go," cried the American, furiously. He glared at the other and laid his hand on his revolver. Jose looked at his master wildly. He made a piteous gesture. Then slowly he fell back, watching the hard face of the American for a sign of mercy.

Richardson had resolved in his rage that at any rate he was going to use the eyes and ears of extreme fear to detect the approach of danger; and so he established his servant as a sort of an outpost.

As they proceeded he was obliged to watch sharply to see that the servant did not slink forward and join him. When Jose made beseeching circles in the air with his arm he replied by menacingly gripping his revolver.

Jose had a revolver, too; nevertheless it was very clear in his mind that the revolver was not an American weapon. He had been educated in the Rio Grande country.

Richardson lost the trail once. He was recalled to it by the loud sobs of his servant.

Then at last Jose came clattering forward, gesticulating and wailing. The little horse sprang to the shoulder of the black. The two were off.

Richardson, again looking backward, could see a slanting flare of dust on the whitening plain. He thought that he could detect small moving figures in it.

Jose's moans and cries amounted to a university course in theology. They broke continually from his quivering lips. His spurs were motors. They forced the black horse over the plain in great headlong leaps.

But under Richardson there was a little insignificant rat-colored beast who was apparently running with almost as much effort as it requires for a bronze statue to stand still. As a matter of truth, the ground seemed merely something to be touched from time to time with hoofs that were as light as blown leaves. Occasionally Richardson lay back and pulled stoutly at his bridle to keep from abandoning his servant.

Jose harried at his horse's mouth, flayed around in his saddle and made his two heels beat like flails. The black ran like a horse in despair.

Crimson serapes in the distance resembled drops of blood on the great cloth of plain.

Richardson began to dream of all possible chances. Although quite a horse man he did not once think of his servant, Jose, being a Mexican. It was natural that he should be killed in Mexico; but for himself, a New Yorker—

He remembered all the tales of such races for life, and he thought them all badly written.

The great black horse was becoming indifferent. The tale of Jose's spurs no longer caused him to bound forward in wild leaps of pain. Jose had at last succeeded in teaching him that spurring was to be expected, speed or no speed, and now he took the pain of it dully and stolidly, as an animal who finds that doing his best gains him no respite.

Jose was led into a ravine. He howled and screamed, working his arms and heels like one in a fit. He resembled a man on a sinking ship, who appeals to the ship. Richardson, too, cried madly to the black horse.

The spirit of the horse responded to these calls, and quivering and breathing heavily he made a great effort, as of a final rush, not for himself apparently, but because he understood that his life's sacrifice, perhaps, had been invoked by these two men who cried to him in the universal tongue.

Richardson had no sense of appreciation at this time—he was too frightened—but even now he remembers a certain black horse.

From the rear could be heard a yelling, and once a shot was fired—in the air, evidently. Richardson moaned as he looked back. He kept his hand on his revolver. He tried to imagine the brief tumult of his capture—the hurry of dust from the hoofs of horses pulled suddenly to their haunches, the shrill, biting curses of the men, the ring of the shots, his own last contention. He wondered, too, if he could not somehow manage to pelt that fat Mexican, just to cure his abominable egotism.

It was Jose, the terror-stricken, who drew the reins of safety. Suddenly he gave a howl of delight and astonished his horse into a new burst of speed. They were on a little ridge at the time, and the American at the top of it saw his servant gallop down the slope and into the arms, so to speak, of a small column of horsemen in gray and silver clothes. In the dim light of the early morning they were as vague as shadows, but Richardson knew them at once for a detachment of rurales, that crack cavalry corps of the Mexican army which polices the plain so zealously, being of themselves the law and the arm of it—a fierce and swift-moving body that knows little of prevention but much of vengeance. They drew up suddenly, and the jaws of great silver-trimmed sombreros bobbed in surprise.

Richardson saw Jose throw himself from his horse and begin to jabber at the leader of the party. When he arrived he found that his servant had already outlined the entire situation, and was then engaged in describing him, Richardson, as an American, a sort of vast wealth who was the friend of almost every governmental potentate within 200 miles. This seemed to profoundly impress the officer. He bowed gravely to Richardson and smiled significantly at his men, who unstung their carbines.

The little ridge hid the pursuers from view, but the gleam of their horses' feet could be heard. Occasionally they yelled and called to each other.

Then at last they swept over the brow of the hill, a wild mob of almost fifty drunken horsemen. When they

discerned the pale-uniformed rurales, they were sailing down the slope at top-speed.

If toboggans half way down a hill should suddenly make up their minds to turn around and go back there would be an effect somewhat like that now produced by the drunken horsemen. Richardson saw the rurales serenely swing their carbines forward, and, peculiarly-minded person that he was, felt his heart leap into his throat at the prospective volley. But the officer rode forward alone.

It appeared that the man who owned the best horse in this astonished company was the fat Mexican with the smoky mustache, and, in consequence, this gentleman was quite a distance in the van. He tried to pull up, wheel his horse and scuttle back over the hill as some of his companions had done, but the officer called to him in a voice harsh with rage.

"This is my friend," the officer said, "my friend, do you dare pursue him?"

These lines represent terrible names, all different, used by the officer.

The fat Mexican simply groveled on his horse's back. His face was green; it could be seen that he expected death.

The officer stormed with magnificent intensity.

Finally he sprang from his saddle, and, running to the fat Mexican's side, yelled: "Go—!" and kicked the horse in the belly with all his might. The animal gave a mighty leap into the air, and the fat Mexican, with one wretched glance at the contemplative rurales, aimed his steed for the top of the ridge.

Richardson again gulped in expectation of a volley, for—it is said—is one of the favorite methods of the rurales for disposing of objectionable people. The fat, green Mexican also evidently thought that he was to be killed while on the run, from the miserable look he cast at the troops. Nevertheless, he was allowed to vanish in a cloud of yellow dust at the ridge-top.

Jose was exultant, defiant, and, oh, bristling with courage. The black horse was drooping sadly, his nose to the ground. Richardson's little animal, with his ears bent forward, was staring at the horses of the rurales as if in an intense study. Richardson longed for speech, but he could only bend forward and pat the shining, slicken shoulders. The little horse turned his head and looked back gravely.

(THE END.)

"An Engagement," the first story written by Sir Robert Peel, son of the late speaker of the house of commons, will begin next Monday."

A SLAVE FROM BOYHOOD

From the Red Wing, Minn., Republican: "I am now twenty-four years old," said Edwin Swanson, of White Rock, Goodhue county, Minn., to a Republican representative, "and as you can see I am not very large of stature. When I was eleven years old I became afflicted with a sickness which baffled the skill and knowledge of the physician. I was not taken suddenly ill, but on the contrary I can hardly state the exact time when it began. The first symptoms were pains in my back and restless nights. The disease did not trouble me much at first, but it seemed to have settled in my body to stay and my bitter experience during the last thirteen years proved that to be the case. I was of course a child and never dreamed of the suffering in store for me. I complained to my parents and they concluded that in time I would outgrow my trouble, but when they heard me groaning during my sleep they became thoroughly alarmed. Medical advice was sought, but to no avail. I grew rapidly worse and was soon unable to move about and finally became confined continually to my bed. The best doctors that could be had were consulted, but did nothing for me. I tried various kinds of extensively advertised patent medicines with but the same result."

"For twelve long years I was thus a sufferer in constant agony without respite. Abscesses formed on my body in rapid succession and the world indeed looked very dark to me. About this time when all hope was gone and nothing seemed left but to resign myself to my most bitter fate, my attention was called to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. Like a drowning man grasping at a straw, in sheer desperation I concluded to make one more attempt—not to regain my health (I dare not hope so much) but if possible to ease my pain."

"I bought a box of the pills and they seemed to do me good. I felt encouraged and continued their use. After taking six boxes I was up and able to walk around the house. I have not felt so well for thirteen years as during the past year. Only one year have I taken Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and I am able now to do chores and attend to light duties."

"Do you hesitate to let you publish what I have said? No. Why should I? It is the truth and I am only too glad to let other sufferers know my experience. It may help those whose cup of misery is as full to-day as mine was in the past."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills contain, in a condensed form, all the elements necessary to give new life and richness to the blood and restore shattered nerves. They are also a specific for troubles peculiar to females, such as suppressions, irregularities and all forms of weakness. They build up the blood and restore the glow of health to pale and sallow cheeks. In men they effect a radical cure in all cases arising from mental worry, overwork or excesses of whatever nature. Pink Pills are sold in boxes (never in loose bulk) at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2 50, and may be had of all druggists, or direct by mail from Dr. Williams' Medicine Company, Schenectady, N. Y.

THERE are some people who are never positive in anything. It is always, "I don't know," or "I guess so." There is a world of such people, and it is refreshing sometimes to hear a person speak as one having convictions. Like Mr. Charles F. Snyder, of Bangor, Pa., who wrote: "I can heartily recommend Simmons Liver Regulator to all who are troubled with Dyspepsia or Liver Complaint."

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Remember when you attend a play or concert how many people disturb the performance by coughing. One man begins and the cough seems to be contagious. The interruption is a great nuisance, and there is no need of it, for anyone may cure a cough with the Pineola Balsam, which costs twenty-five cents. It soothes the inflammation in the throat and loosens the mucus which clogs the air passages. A few doses of Dr. F. J. Pineola Balsam stop a cough and heal a sore throat.

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